143

A DISCOURSE

Perswading to the

PRACTICE OF Celerity, Constancy, & Sincerity IN THE WAYS of GOD.

Preached at the Funeral of Mrs. *Elizabeth Knock*, Daughter of Mr. *Thomas Knock*, of *Edgerton* in *Kent*, who died *January* 2. *Anno Dom.* 1692. in the Eleventh year of her Age.

By *William Bush* Minister of the Gospel.

Non dormentibus provenit regnum cœlorum nec otio & desidiæ torpentibus beatitudo æternitatis ingeritur. Prosp. de vi. contempl.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

Christian Readers,

Especially the

AUDITORS

OF THIS

SERMON.

HAving now compli'd with the Desires of those that were the Hearers of this Discourse, to make it Publick, I hope 'twill meet with that Ac-

ceptation as Discourses of this Nature should among Christians. That the Subject might have been managed after a better manner, is not at all doubted of, but acknowledged; and I hope the Reader will be more favourable than to Censure me as Proud or Conceited of my own Labours, or Ambitious of appearing in Print; assuring you, I had not done it now, had it been possible for me fairly to have avoided it. And altho the manner after which the Subject is managed,

ged, be mean and despisable, yet the Matter in self may be useful (by the Blessing of the Almighty) to excite Slothful Christians to a greater diligence in their Duty; to reduce the wandring to the right way; to keep such as are going on in the ways of God, from Apostatizing; and to discover and beat down that great sin, Hypocrisy, that is (tis to be fear'd) predominant in a great many seeming serious Christians, and in some as much unknown to themselves

as to others. If any object against it, because of its plainness, I hope this Answer will satisfy them; It was not design'd to please Persons Fancies, but to profit their Souls; and I had rather be understood, than admir'd. I now hope, Christians, you will propose the same end to your selves in Reading, as I do in Writing, which is, That your Souls might receive benefit and comfort thereby. I shall say no more, but beseech the God of all Grace to help and enable you so to run

the Race that is ſet before you, that you may at laſt obtain a Crown of Glory. And this I ſhall do particularly for you that were the Hearers of this Sermon, and that uſually attend upon my Miniſtry. I conclude my ſelf,

Your Souls Friend and Servant

in the Goſpel of Chriſt Jeſus,

W. Bush.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE CELESTIAL RACE.

1 Cor. ix. 24. latter part.

So run, that ye may obtain.

WHEN we seriously reflect upon the certainty of our Dying, and the uncertainty of the time when; when we consider too, that the longest time of living is but short, so short, that if it were well improved in working out our Salvation, we should find very few spare minutes; or that we had too much, we should seldom be heard to complain. I say, when we seriously

ously consider of these things, surely we shall be mov'd to a greater diligence in preparing for Eternity, in making ready our Accounts, in running swiftly the Race that is set before us, lest Death overtake us as we are loytering, and stop us before our Course be finished, and then we are eternally undone. I therefore pray and beseech you; in the Name of my Master Christ, not only to give serious Attention to this seasonable Exhortation that the Apostle gives you in my Text, but also to make it your practice so to run, as to obtain.

II

In the former part of the verse, the Apostle borroweth a similitude from those that run a Terrestial Race for a Temporary Reward; that as in that Race, tho many run, yet 'tis only he that out-runs the rest that persevereth to the end, that obtains the Prize; even so in the Race of Godliness, none shall be crown'd, but those that hold out to the end of their lives. Yet, notwithstanding, there

there is this difference in this Similitude. In the Race Terrestial he only is rewarded that cometh first to the Mark; but in the Race Celestial, not only one, but all that run lawfully, shall obtain.

The Doctrine that I shall (by the assistance of the Almighty) discourse of from the words, is this,

That the greatest Speediness and Celerity in the ways of God, must be constantly practised by those that would obtain everlasting Life.

The Method that I shall follow in speaking to this Doctrine, will be this,

1. I shall give you Reasons for the proof of it.

2. Shew you how you may fit and prepare your selves to run speedily and swiftly in this heavenly Race.

3. Speak

3. Speak of the Reward impli'd in my Text, which will be certainly given to those that run lawfully. And,

4. And lastly, Apply it.

That those that run in this heavenly Race, must run swiftly and speedily, I shall prove by these three Reasons.

The first may be drawn from the celerity, brevity, and uncertainty of our Lives, which here in my Text, is compar'd to a Race for swiftness in passing away; for *so run that ye may obtain*, is as if the Apostle had said, So live under the Gospel of Christ Jesus, that ye may obtain Life everlasting. The Life of Man is always (in Scripture) compared to such things as denote the celerity, the brevity, and the uncertainty of it; sometimes 'tis compar'd to a shadow, as *Psalm* 109. 23. sometimes to a vapour, as *James* 4. 14. *that appeareth*

peareth for a little time, and then vanishes away. Job considering the swift passage of mans Life, compareth it to the swift motion of the Eagle when hasting to her prey; or the swift Ships on the Waters; Job 9. 26. that which is of least duration, and of most speedy passage, may be a fit Comparison of the Life of Man; the youngest, and the strongest in a very short space must be removed hence. Active Youth is quickly metamorphosed into crooked Age; so frail and uncertain are our lives, that for ought we know, one week, or day, or hour, yea, perhaps one moment more, may put a period to them. We have daily Examples of the uncertainty of the time of our departure hence; we see one cut down in his early Spring, and in his blooming greener Youth, and his Sun is covered with Darkness, almost as soon as it begins to rise, whilst another weathers out the Storms, and grows to a mature and full Age. One does but peep as it

were

were into the World, takes a short view of it, and is commanded out again; and is at his Journeys end in the morning of his Life; and another is allowed to travel till the shadows of the Evening are stretched out, according to their most regular Advances, and till the threescore and ten, that is the usual date of long Life, is expired. One is quickly summon'd to the great Tribunal and judged, whilst another has a longer space wherein to prepare for his Tryal, and his final Doom. You may now, for ought you know, be hearing of your last Sermon, and offer up now your last Prayer, and have no other opportunity than this that you now enjoy, to prepare and make ready for Eternity, but be immediately summoned to appear at the Tribunal of God, to render an Account to him of all your publick and secret Actions, for all that you have ever thought, ever spoke, or done; for all the Talents, the Time, the Mercies,

Vid. Mr. Roger's Practical Discourse of Sickness and Recovery, page 13.

Mercies, the Health, the Strength, the Opportunities, and the Seasons, and Days of Grace that you ever had; for all the Evil that you might have avoided; for all the Good that you might have done, and did not, and all this before that Judge, who has beheld your ways from your Birth to the Grave; before that Judge who cannot be deceiv'd, and who will not be imposed upon. And is there not then a necessity of being speedy in your Course? Do you apprehend so much as one minute to dayten in, seeing you know not whether you may live so small a space of time longer? And when this Life is ended, our work is done, for after this Life there will be no place for Pardon, nor space for Repentance; *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledg, nor wisdom in the grave whither we are all going.* Therefore must we be speedy in the ways of God, because the time of our lives (which is all the time

Vid. Mr. Roger's Practical Discourse of Sickness and Recovery, page 49.

Eccl. 9. 10.

time we have) is so short, so uncertain, and hasting away so fast from us.

The second Reason may be drawn from the great Work that we have to do in this little time. How many Corruptions have we to subdue, and Lusts to mortify, and Temptations to resist? What loads of Sin yet lye upon many of us unpardoned, because unrepented of? What subtil, politick, powerful Enemies have we to engage with, such as the World, the Flesh, and the Devil? The World is daily enticeing of us with its Pleasures, Profits, or Honours, perswading us to place our Affections upon these fading Vanities, and to accept of its favours, which, alas, are but as the Salutes of an Enemy; and yet how hard is it for the best of God's People to keep themselves from the Pollutions of it! That it is so, our own daily Experience teacheth us; and yet this so enticing an Enemy we must keep our selves from the

loving

loving of; for if any Man love the World, *i. e.* with a predominant Love, or the *things that are in the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* A ſecond Enemy is the Fleſh, which always murmurs at Subjection, and is at continual variance with the Spirit; and there is great difficulty in overcoming ſo near a Foe: This was it, that made that great Apoſtle, *volens nolens*, become a Captive. *Cæſar* being once ask'd, What was the moſt difficult thing to overcome in this Life? Anſwered, *Seipſum vincere*, to overcome himſelf and his untamed Affections. The third is the Devil, called, Σατανᾶς, from the *Hebrew* word, שטנה, *Sitnah*, which is *Adverſarius*, an Adverſary; he is really the implacable Enemy of our Souls, and joyns his Aſſiſtance to the World and Fleſh, that ſo by one means or other he might deſtroy us; this is he that tempts ſo ſubtilly, ſo frequently, that we muſt, and

1 John ii. 15.

Gal. 5. 17.

Rom. 7. 18

Vid. Leigh's Crit. Sacra. p. 235.

ought to be always prepared for him; and unless we are furnished with the whole Armour of God, 'tis impossible for us to withstand him; so subtil and potent is he, that the holiest Souls, at some time or other, have been overcome by him. Now, what great reason is there for us to use the greatest speed we can, that have not only so little time, and so much work to do in it, but also such subtil and potent Enemies to contend with, and to overcome? Well might the Apostle say *, *Work* (not play, or idle) *out your salvation with fear and trembling.* Well may the Church of God be called *Ecclesia Militans*, seeing it has so many, and so great Enemies, continually to engage with.

Ephes. 4. from 13. to 18.

* Phil. 2. 12. *Non dicit Apostolus nude* ἐργάζεσθε *sed* κατεργάζεσθε, *id est, accuratè magnoque cum studio operamini.* Chryst.

A third, and last, may be drawn from Example: Those that run an earthly Race, tho but for a mean Reward, what pains do they take, how extremely do they strain themselves, that they may run swiftly

to

to obtain? And ſhall we that run the Celeſtial Race (and that for ſo great a Reward as Heaven is) run ſlowly? Shall they take greater pains, and be more ſwift and ſpeedy for a periſhing Reward, than we for an eternal one? God forbid! The Sun too, may be an Example to us in this reſpect, *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoyceth as a ſtrong man to run his race.* And not only is the Sun an Example to us, but alſo our Lord himſelf, who whilſt he was in the World, was never idle: He wrought *the works of him that ſent him, while it was day.* He left the boſome of his Father, and came into the World, and became Man, and was like unto Man in all things, Sin only excepted; overcame Death and Hell, fulfill'd the Law of God, and ſatisfied his Juſtice for us, appeaſed his Wrath againſt us, and has purchaſed for his People, by his Pſalm 19. 5. John 9. 4.

Death, Everlaſting Life. Thus was all his time vigorouſly employ'd in performing the work he came about; well might the Church compare him (for his ſwiftneſs) *to a Roe, or a young Hart.*

Cant. 2. 9.

Thus have I prov'd, That Celerity and Speed in the ways of God, muſt of neceſſity be practiſed by thoſe that would obtain Everlaſting Life. And that, *Firſt*, becauſe of the ſhortneſs of our Lives, and their ſpeedy paſſing away from us; ſo ſoon are our days done, that if we are not ſpeedy, they will be gone before our work be done.

Secondly, Becauſe of the great work we have to do in this little time, which is ſo great, that we have need of more, rather than ſpare (for Sin and Vanity) any of that we have.

Thirdly, Becauſe of the Examples of Swiftneſs and Speedineſs, that we

we have, not only of Perſons that run with the greateſt ſpeedineſs an earthly Race, for the fading Vanities of the World; and of the Sun; but alſo of our Lord himſelf, who was moſt ſpeedy in working out our Redemption, and ought to be imitated of all Chriſtians. For every Action of Chriſt ought to be inſtruction unto us, he hath left us an Example; let us therefore tread in his ſteps, *who is the way, the truth, and the life.*

Omnis Chriſti actio, noſtra debet eſſe inſtructio. Gregor. Joh. 14.6.

Now this Celerity, this Speedineſs in the ways of God muſt be conſtantly and continually practiſed without giving over, and that to the end of your lives; for beginning well in the ways of Godlineſs, is nothing, unleſs perſeverance be reſolv'd; for as thoſe that run a Race, tho they run never ſo directly, never ſo ſwiftly, ſhall not obtain the prize unleſs they perſevere to the end of it, even ſo if we continue not in the ways of God

to the end of our lives, we ſhall miſs of Heaven. The Soldier is not rewarded with Spoil, till he hath obtain'd the Victory, neither ſhall we be crown'd, till we have been more than Conquerors in Chriſt Jeſus. Should you live in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel for many years, and at laſt prove Apoſtates, you would miſs of Salvation; 'tis none but thoſe that endure to the end that ſhall be ſaved; and yet notwithſtanding, there are many that are guilty in this reſpect; this Age abounds with ſhort-winded Profeſſors, that are eager for a ſpurt, and then give over; that for fear of Affliction, or Reproach, or the Impair of their Credit, or Eſteem in the World; nay, ſome ſuch Fools there are, (for I can call them by no fitter Name) that for a Scoff, or a Jeer, will turn back, will carry the Lord his Livery home again, and will wear it no longer: But it had been better

Rom. 8. 37.

Matth. 10. 22.

better for ſuch, that they had never known the ways of God, than thus to depart from them; nay, it had been better that they had never been born, for God abhors Apoſtates with his Soul; therefore if you would obtain Heaven, pull not your Necks out of Chriſts Yoak, keep forward, give not over upon any account; but the very firſt ſtep you take in the ways of Godlineſs, reſolve (by the aſſiſtance of Divine Grace) to perſevere to the end of your Lives, for it muſt (you ſee) of neceſſity be done. Remember *Lot*'s Wife, who for looking back was turn'd into a Pillar of Salt, for an Example to all thoſe that hereafter ſhould turn their backs upon God. Let the Apoſtle, therefore, be our Pattern in this reſpect, *To preſs forward towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Heb. 10.38.

Phil. 3.14.

Having thus prov'd the Doctrine, I proceed to the ſecond particular, namely, to ſhew you how you may fit and prepare your ſelves to run ſpeedily and ſwiftly in this Heavenly Race.

If therefore you would be fitted and prepared to run ſpeedily and ſwiftly in the ways of God, obſerve theſe three things:

Firſt, Avoid wicked Company, which has been the ruin of many a Soul. When Conſcience is once thoroughly awakened, and Perſons come to be convinced of the Soul-deſtroying Nature of their Sins, amongſt other their complaints, do we not ſometimes hear them utter ſuch as theſe; O that I had never known the Names, nor ſeen the Faces of ſuch and ſuch Perſons! Theſe were they that enticed me to Sin, to ruin my Soul; theſe were they that taught me to ſpeak the Language of Hell; theſe were

were they that taught me to damn, and to ſink my own, and others precious Souls; theſe were they (that by the help of the Devil, and my own corrupt Inclinations) made me in love with all manner of Iniquity, and to hate the thoughts of Piety, and living to my Creator and God; theſe were they that made me out of love with the ways of Holineſs, and to become an utter Enemy to thoſe that walk in them; theſe were they that encouraged me in every thing that was offenſive to the Almighty, in every thing that might further the ruin of my poor Soul; to deſpiſe the Counſel of my Godly Parents, Relations, and Friends; to mock at the wholſome Inſtructions of Gods Miniſters, and to laugh and jeer at Hell and Damnation. O that I ſhould adhere to their deviliſh Counſel! O that I ſhould be ſo eaſily drawn away to my own ruin! I ſay, are not theſe ſometimes the complaints

complaints of many poor Souls? And who is able to expreſs the Sorrows they undergo upon this account, before their Comfort comes, if not, go mourning to their Graves. O conſider when you are gaming, or ſwearing, or drinking to excels, or profaning the Lords day, *&c.* with your wicked Companions, how unlikely you are to make haſte to Heaven, when you are going in the ready way that leads to Hell. Now this I would have all take ſpecial notice of, but eſpecially young Perſons, for they are more ſubject to be drawn away; the green Twig is eaſily bent; O young Perſons, I beſeech you (if you would run with ſpeed in the ways of God) take heed of wicked Company; though they entice you never ſo frequently, never ſo ſtrongly; like thoſe, *Proverbs* 1. from 11. to 15. though they pretend never ſuch Friendſhip and Love; Yet, as one ſays, never count them your

your Friends, nor such as will do you any kindness, that would lead you to Sin, the Devil, and Damnation. Though they tell you of time enough when you are old, to seek after Heaven and Happiness, and that 'tis Folly and Madness, to spend the prime of your time in seeking for uncertainties, and bringing your selves to such a Course of Life, as deprives you of all Comfort, Delight, and Pleasure; though they endeavour to dissuade you from going forward, by telling you of Lions in the way, and would have you turn back again, and Sin your selves to Hell with them; and endeavour to stay you so long till you have not time enough (should you be never so speedy) to reach your Journeys end, yet hearken to none of their Delusions, bid defiance to them all. As to their perswading you to let alone your Repentance till old Age; tell them, late Repentance is seldom

dom ſafe. Tell them there's no reaſon that God ſhould accept of the lame and rotten Service of your old Age, when you have given the prime of your ſtrength to the Devil. Therefore take *Solomon's* Counſel, *My Son, if ſinners entice thee, conſent thou not. My ſon, walk not thou in the way with them, refrain thy feet from their path.* It was not lawful for a *Jew* to converſe with a *Samaritane*, neither might the *Hebrew* eat with the *Egyptian*, but it was accounted abominable; neither is it lawful for us that are going to Heaven to be the Familiars of thoſe that are going to Hell. *We are commanded to withdraw our ſelves from thoſe that walk diſorderly*, 2 Theſſal. 3. 6. I beſeech you therefore a ſecond time (particularly young ones) to abandon ſuch, for they will greatly impede and hinder you in your way: O be like the *Pſalmiſt*, *A companion of all them that fear the Lord,*

Prov. 1. 10. and 15.

Pſal. 119. 63.

Lord, and that keep his precepts; Theſe will further you in your way, and excite you to be ſpeedy in your Courſe, and encourage you by helping of you forward all they can, and accompany you in your way, which will be great Comfort. But ſo much as to the firſt particular, namely, That if we would run with ſpeedineſs in the ways of God, we muſt avoid wicked Company, which if we do not, will be a very great, yea, a continual, if not an eternal hindrance to us.

Secondly, If we would be prepared to run ſpeedily and ſwiftly in this heavenly Race, we muſt be unloaded of the things of this World. Perſons that run a Terreſtrial Race diveſt themſelves of their Garments, that they may run more ſwiftly; ſo if we would run ſwiftly in the ways of Holineſs, we muſt be diſburdened ſo far of the things of this World, as that they may not impede

pede our course, or make us run slowly; some are so cumber'd with the world that they can't wag a foot towards Heaven; and others so clogg'd that if they do go at all, 'tis very heavily, hardly set one foot before another, as we say: O how do they suffer the world to take up so much of their precious time, that they can scarce find any leisure either for Closet-devotions, or Family-Prayers, but make their Religion give place to their worldly businesses. And when at any time they fall upon the performance of Holy Duties, how are their hearts at that very time taken up with worldly thoughts, and imaginations; so that instead of conversing with God in his Holy Ordinances, and enjoying Communion with him therein, they converse with the world, and hold Communion with the Devil. Too many there are whose actions tell us, that they have no time to pray in their Families, no time

Mr Gouges Word to Sinners, &c. page 135.

time to instruct their Children and Servants in the things of God; no time to think of God, nor of their Duty to him; much less to perform it; no time to prepare for Death and Eternity, nor to consider of the state of their poor Souls. Surely such as these will not dare to make such a plea at the Bar of God, when he shall ask them, Why did you not obey my Commands, and observe to do my pleasure? Why did you not take care of your Souls, and mind Eternity by preparing for it? I say surely such as these dare not reply, Lord, we had no time, which is in effect to say, Lord, we spent so much time in Trading for Earth, that we had no time to Trade for Heaven: We had so much business in the Shop, that we could not frequent our Closets much: In truth, Lord, we had so much love for the things of the world, that we had none for thee nor our poor souls. Good God! what

what will be the ſtate of ſuch ſouls! ſurely, if there may be noted degrees of torments in a place of ſuch miſery as Hell is, theſe muſt have the hotteſt there. Now 'tis love to the world that makes perſons ſo eager after it; if they did not love the world and the things thereof, they would not ſpend ſo much time and pains in ſeeking after the vanities thereof; and 'tis this that makes you right worldlings, for 'tis not the bare having, or poſſeſſing of the things of this world that makes you ſuch. Now 'tis impoſſible for thoſe to run ſpeedily and ſwiftly in the ways of God, that have placed their affections on the world; a worldling may make, indeed, a fair profeſſion, and ſhew great forwardneſs, and ſpeedineſs in the ways of God, like the rich young man, but when it comes to this, That their worldly enjoyments muſt be parted with, if they would keep themſelves in

Vid. Mat. 19. 20, 21, 22.

God's

God's ways; if they would run so as to obtain, which is speedily, why then they leave going any farther, and are with him, seemingly sorry, that Heaven can't be had at cheaper rates, so that their love to God and his ways is but from the teeth outward, as we say; 'tis no more than what may serve their interest in the world; so that in reality, the world is their God, their treasure is here, and their hearts must of necessity be here too, *for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.* O therefore, whatever we have of the things of this world, let us not set our hearts upon them, let us not incumber our selves so much with them, as to let them take up all, or so much of our time, as to have none (or not enough) to spare for, to seek after (so as to obtain) Heaven: let us no longer so love the world, nor the things of it, as to suffer it to keep us

Mat. 6. 21.

back, or to hinder us in our running this Heavenly race. Let us not paint it with more alluring Colours, lest we be still more in love with it, and more loth to leave it; for shall we more easily part with things sumptuous, and splendid, than with things that are meaner and less suited to a fleshly mind and life? We are Pilgrims, and shall we be so industrious to plant, and build, and sow in a strange Country, when we confess we are distant from our home? What man would set himself to adorn his Inn, from which he may dislodg the next morning, and it may be never see it any more? Surely the fadingness of the things of this world, might make us out of love with them: You may be rich and honourable to day, and by the morrow, Beggars. He that seriously considers of the many and great enjoyments that *Job* was possessed with, and how soon he was de-

Vid. Mr. *Roger's* Pract. Discourse of Sickn. and Recov. pa. 226, 227.

Job 1.

depriv'd of all, and (brought to the Dunghill, certainly can say no more of this world and things of it, than what the Wiseman says, *Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Why should sick Dreams run away with our hearts? what are all those things your hearts lust after, but the scum, froth, dross, and refuse of the Creation? Ah poor fools! why are your hearts so much bewitch'd with these night-visions, whorish Idols, or cursed nothings of time? Remember how dear you pay for your beloved Idols, how much they are salted with the curse of God. What fools are we to suffer our selves to be hindred in our way to Heaven, by and for such things as are of so short a duration and continuance. Were the things of this world never so excellent, delightful and profitable, yet the consideration of their speedy passing away, should be, (one

Eccles. 1. 1

Mr. *Gale's* Serm. in the Supplem. to the Morn. Exercise, &c.

would think) an argument sufficient to wean our love from them, and to keep us from suffering any thing of the world to stop or hinder us in running our race. 'Twas a great saying of that *Jansenist*, *I would never begin to love that, which one day I must cease to love.*

fly. And lastly, As we must be unladen without, so we must also be empty within: Now that which clogs us within, and hinders us from running speedily in the ways of God, is sin; this is a dead weight to the soul, and 'tis impossible for you to take one right step towards Heaven, (much less to run with speed) whilst you remain in a state of sin. For while you are in such a state, you are in a dead state, you taste not the goodness of God, nor hear his loudest Calls; you tremble not at his most dreadful threats, neither are you drawn with his love, nor start at his

Mr. Rogers Pra. Disco. of Sickn. and Reco. p. 114.

his approaching wrath. Your ignorance has deprived your souls of all knowledg of your own miseries; you are in a state of death and insensibility; and your case is the more sad, because you are like to fall under the power of eternal death; and though your temporal life is prolonged for a season, yet we may say of you as of Malefactors under the sentence of the Law for their crimes, They are dead men, though there be a Reprieve, or a delay of execution for a little space. You may as well expect a dead Corpse to go or run, as expect such as are in a state of sin, to do so in this Heavenly race. Or a person loaded with a burden, that he is scarce able to stand under, to be as speedy in going, as one that hath no burden at all. And although persons in a state of unregeneracy and sin, are not sensible what a burden sin is; that it will sink 'em to Hell if it be not

remov'd; yet when once Conscience is awakned, they will then say of their sins as *David* did of his, *as an heavy burden they are*
Psal. 38. 4. *too heavy for me*; too heavy for me to bear long; so heavy, that if Infinite mercy doth not ease nor release me, I must fall under it.
Mat. 11. 30. If the yoke of Christ be easie, and his burden light, than of necessity on the contrary, must the yoke of the Devil, which is sin, be uneasie, heavy, and intollerable to be born; and yet how many are there, that by the course of their lives seem to be of the opinion, that 'tis possible for them (notwithstanding the burden of their sins) to be speedy enough in the ways of God, to obtain Heaven; that their external profession (without any such thing as repentance and a holy life) will save them; but O how greatly will they be mistaken! no doubt but there are many in Hell, that have heard and pray'd as much,

or

or more than ever you have done. Thus you see how great a burden sin is, and how vast a hinderance 'tis to you in your way; nay, such a weight and burden is sin, that it will hinder you from ever obtaining Heaven, if it be not remov'd before death. O therefore endeavour to get rid of this burden; loath, detest, and abhor sin, because God doth loath, detest, and abhor you for sin; because it seeks the utter ruin of your precious souls; beg of God to make you sensible that sin is a burden, and then when you feel the weight of it, you will not be unwilling to part with it; beseech him to quicken you *who are dead in tresses and sins*; plead with him earnestly to make you sincerely willing to part with your whole burden, with all your sins; for every sin must be left, or you had as good keep them all. Can you let all your sins go but this one? even

Eph. 2. 1.

Mr. *Gouge's* Word to Sinners, *&c.* pag. 167.

even this muſt go too, or your life muſt go for it: O ſet your ſelves againſt every ſin, great and ſmall, open and ſecret, carnal and ſpiritual; ſet your ſelves againſt them heartily; be willing to proſper and overcome; and ſet upon them ſpeedily; let not iniquity live a day longer, nor ſleep a night more in quiet with you. O let not that which is ſo much your hinderance, be retain'd by you; let God ſee your wearineſs of ſin, by your earneſtneſs to be rid of it; and the great ſenſe you have of the impoſſibility of getting to Heaven with it; that ſo by patient continuing in your Duty, you may at laſt have a gracious releaſe.

I ſhould now ſpeak of the Reward imply'd in my Text; but before I do this, give me leave to ſpeak of one thing that is worthy of your ſtricteſt Obſervation; the

the Apostle does not say, in my Text, seem so to run as to obtain; or make an outward shew of running; but *so run that ye may obtain*; now, in thus expressing of himself, he excludes all Hypocrisy, and counterfeit Godliness; and there is great reason for his doing thus. For in the visible Church, 'tis certain, that there are many that outwardly profess Christ, but inwardly and with their heart deny him; that are Christians by Name, but not such indeed. Many Hypocrites there are, like painted Sepulchers, fair without, but within nothing but rottenness. Here then let me put you upon Examination, whether or no you are not of this number? Hypocrisy is spun of a very fine Thread, and is not easily discernable without very diligent Examination; and things are not to be measured by the outward shew, or by the Lump and Bulk, but by an exacter Rule, whether

Vid. *Bishop Sanderson's Sermon*, 1. ad populum, *p.* 175.

whether they be true or no: doſt thou bewail thy Sins with Tears? Doſt thou avoid groſs Sins with care? Doſt thou oppoſe againſt common Corruptions with zeal? Why all this thou mayeſt do, and
Page 172. yet be a Hypocrite. Nay, you may, as the ſame Author ſays, be touched with a deep feeling of your Sins, and with heavy Hearts and many Tears confeſs and bewail them, and not only promiſe, but alſo purpoſe amendment; you may be ſuperficially affected with, and find ſome overly comfort and refreſhing from the Contemplation of thoſe gracious promiſes of Mercy, and Reconciliation, and Salvation, which are contained in the glorious Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and have ſome degrees of perſwaſion that theſe promiſes are true, and ſome flaſhes of Confidence withal of your own perſonal Intereſt therein; all this and much more may you do, and yet be rotten (as he ſays)

says) at Heart; wholly carnal, and unrenewed, quite empty of sound Faith, and Repentance, and Obedience, and every good Grace; full of damnable Pride and Hypocrisy, as you may see Examples in *Saul*'s care for the destroying of Witches; in *Jehu*'s zeal in killing *Baal*'s Worshippers; in *Herod*'s hearing of *John Baptist* gladly, and doing many things too; in *Ahab*'s Repentance and Humiliation. O therefore look to your hearts, be willing to know what they are, and don't play the Hypocrite with your Souls! Consider, there's no Sin more odious in the sight of God than this. You shall never enter Heaven notwithstanding all your Prayers and Tears, if you are Hypocrites. When you shall plead for Mercy at the Day of Judgment, Christ will tell you, he knows you not. May I a little also gloss upon your Misery when you come to Hell, which will be most

1 Sam. 28. 3. 2 Kings 10. 16, 28. Mark 6. 20. 1 Kings 21. 27.

Simulata sanctitas, est duplex iniquitas.

Matth. 7. 23.

most intollerable; you will share in the greatest of them. The loose and prophane Wretches that lived like Devils Incarnate in the World, that spent very little or no time in Prayer, or Hearing, or any other Duties, and that took you always for Saints, because of your seeming strictness in the ways of God, when they shall see you in the same dreadful Condition with themselves, 'twill make them (if 'twere possible) laugh in Hell, to see that this is the end of your Profession, of your strictness in the ways of God, of your praying, and hearing, and the like; this will greatly aggravate your Torment. O therefore, for Christs sake, and the sake of your own precious Souls, beware of Hypocrisy. I would (had I time) have given you some particular Marks of Hypocrisy; at present then make but this out clearly, That Hypocrisy is not predominant in you, but that in

in simplicity and sincerity of heart (and not with fleshly Wisdom) you have your Conversations in the World; you may then be sure you are not in the number of those Hypocrites that shall be banished for ever from the Presence of the Lord, and turned into Hell.

I now return to my third and last Doctrinal head, namely, to speak of the Reward implied in my Text, which shall be certainly given to those that run lawfully, that run thus speedily and swiftly, constantly and sincerely in this Heavenly Race; and this Reward is no other, nor can be no better than Heaven it self; *'Tis your Fathers good plea-* Luke 12. *sure to give you the kingdom.* Now, 32. to speak fully of this glorious place, and the Felicities that God hath prepared there for his People, is impossible; we are not able fully to conceive of them; therefore what-

ever

ever I may now speak concerning the Glories, the Felicities of Heaven; if you ever come there, you will say, behold the thousand part was not told me; but according to what discoveries the Holy Ghost hath made of it in Scripture, we may speak of it, and we may see the Glories of it set forth to us, by the diversity and greatness of the Names thereof, and the Society we shall there enjoy. I shall speak to two or three of the Names thereof briefly.

Revel. 12. 10. Luke 23. 42.

1. 'Tis called the Kingdom of God and Christ, because Christ having overcome Death, Hell, and Damnation, together with all the Enemies that did oppose and hinder us in our way to Heaven, doth rule there, and govern his Church Triumphant with Heavenly Peace, and Everlasting Tranquility. If we could imagine, as indeed we cannot, because experience so mightily

Beverly's *Great Soul of Man*, p. 278.

tily contradicts it, that any Prince should live in all those delights and pleasures the most spendid Court affords, without any tediousness, or satiety ten thousand years; what a dark Representation were this of this Kingdom, tho he could do, and enjoy all he would.

2. 'Tis call'd by the Name of Paradice, in respect of the abundant plenty of the greatest of Pleasures which the Saints can either wish for, or desire. Luke 23. 43.

3. 'Tis call'd Eternal Life, because there shall be no more Death, nor Lamentation, nor Sorrow: We shall quit a vale of Tears, for Rivers of Eternal Pleasures; an Element of Joys succeeds our bitter Cup; our Rights can never be invaded there, nothing can stain the Comforts of that World; no Blots, nor Wounds are there contracted Joh. 3. 15. Matth. 25. 46. *Mr.* Silvester's *Sermon in the Supplement to the Morning Exercise.*

or

or endured; no Troubles in that *Israel*; there are no pauses of Astonishment through surprisals of Afflictions; Death smites no Corners there; Providence makes no Storms; there lies that Ark wherein no vile or wicked *Cham* shall dwell; the Glory of that place it knows no Eclipse, nor Cloud, no dim Discoveries, or flat Notes shall be the Exercise or Entertainment of that State. I might give you more Illustrations upon the great and glorious Names of this Kingdom, but this may serve as a taste of the Glories, the Joys of that blessed place, by which you may discern the excellency thereof.

But now as to the Society that there we shall enjoy. There we shall have the Company of God and Christ, Saints and Angels, and all our Godly Friends and Relations, and joyn with them in singing Hallelujahs to the Lord God Almighty,

mighty, and to the Lamb his Son, that sits upon the Throne for evermore. O how vastly different is that Assembly from such a one as this! Here we are with our unbelief, with our Fears, with our strong Corruptions, and with our many Sins; whereas they are all perfect and compleat in Holiness. We shall then be no more disturbed with the Abuses of the Wicked, we shall be no more griev'd with their Oaths and Curses, nor troubled with their Company, but be in the happy Society of those that will delight us, and such as to Eternity we shall enjoy; and not only shall our Souls enjoy these Felicities, but at the Resurrection our Bodies shall be joyn'd to them, and both shall be happy: Our Bodies shall not be what now they are, foul, unactive Lumps of Clay, they are now pierced with Cold, and worn with Labours, appaled with Griefs and Dangers, and

Vid. Mr. Rogers's *Practical Discourse of Sickness and Recovery*, page 97.

Phil. 3. 21.

Mr. Silvester's *Sermon in the Supplement to the Morning Exercise.*

grip'd with Pains, and macerated with keen and envious Paſſions, and after all, mouldred to Duſt by Death and Rottenneſs; but there neither Deformity, Pains, nor Death, ſhall be their fear nor exerciſe. Thus have I briefly ſhew'd you what this Reward is, that that thoſe ſhall obtain that run, as I have ſhown you, in this Heavenly Race, and the Happineſſes, the Fe'icities, the Glories that there they ſhall injoy. And after all, I muſt conclude ſomewhat like the Apoſtle, That *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man fully to conceive of the things that God hath prepared in heaven for them that love him.*

1 Cor. 2. 9.

Having now done what I promiſed, as to the Doctrinal part, I proceed to the Application.

Is it ſo then, that the greateſt Speedineſs and Celerity in the Ways of

of God, muſt be conſtantly practiſed by thoſe that would obtain everlaſting Life? Then,

Firſt, From hence we may draw a Uſe of Reproof for thoſe Perſons that are creeping (as it were) to Heaven, inſtead of running ſwiftly; that go as if they did not care whether they came there or no, or as if they had an Eternity of Time allow'd them for their Journey. What do you mean, *Sirs*? Your Sun is ſetting, the Night draws on, the Shadows of the Evening have overtaken you, ſtir up your ſelves, O ſlothful Souls, you are upon the very Borders of Eternity; your Lives are but as a Vapour; and what will become of your Souls, if your day is gone before your work be done? Are you not aſhamed to ſee ſo many overtake you? Are you not aſham'd to make no further progreſs, that have ſo many helps provided for James 4. 14.

you, and tender'd to you? Are you not aſham'd that God ſhould ſee you loytering by the way? Are you not aſham'd that every trivial matter ſhould ſtop you? O for ſhame caſt away all your hindrances, get rid of your Obſtructions, and run; you'll be be-lated, O Souls! Don't you ſee what haſte Sinners make to Hell? Shall they ſtrive and run for Damnation, more than you for Salvation? O take this timely Reproof, you lazy, ſlothful ones. What will become of you, if you ſhall idle till Chriſt calls you to an account? How will that word ſound in your ears, *Thou wicked and ſlothful ſervant.* The true cauſe of thy neglect, is thy ſlothfulneſs, and not thy Inability; and when that follows, Verſe 30. *Caſt ye the unprofitable ſervant into utter darkneſs*; throw him into Hell, let him ſee my Face no more. Then will you wiſh (tho too late) that you had been ſpeedy in your Courſe, that

Matth. 25. 26.

that you had improv'd your Time and Talents, but then no more Time, nor Talents will be granted; then you are undone to Eternity. Are you Young? Therefore do you loyter? Do you not ſee Young die as well as Old? Have you not a proof of this now before your Eyes? Are you in Health and Strength? Therefore do you loyter? Don't you ſee as ſtrong as the ſtrongeſt of you, and as healthy as the moſt healthful, ſuddenly ſnatched away. O therefore loyter no longer, begin now to be ſpeedy, leſt an hereafter be never granted. *Behold! now is the accepted time! behold, now is the day of ſalvation.* This Life is the time wherin your Calling and Election muſt be made ſure. This Life is the time wherein you muſt *work out your Salvation with fear and trembling.* This Life is the time wherein you muſt be admitted into the Kingdom of Grace, if ever you expect to be admitted in-

2 Cor. 6. 2.

to the Kingdom of Glory. This Life is the time wherein you muſt run with ſpeed and patience, the Race that is ſet before you, if ever you expect to receive that great and glorious Reward that is prepared for ſuch as are ſpeedy, conſtant, and ſincere in their Courſe: O, therefore mend your pace, leſt you ſhould be be-lated to Heaven.

Let a ſecond Uſe, be a Uſe of Advice, and that to two ſorts of Perſons. *Firſt*, To thoſe that having begun and continued for a time, are now drawing back. I adviſe you that have begun to run in this Heavenly Race, to hold on, and that to the end; 'twill be your own another day; will not theſe Promiſes allure you; *He that endureth to the end, ſhall be ſaved.* Can you deſire a better Reward for your Pains than Salvation? 'Tis no wonder if at any time we ſee a poor Sinner draw back from ſerving the Devil; for

Matth. 10. 22.

he

he may well grow weary of his work, becauſe of his wages; he'll be dreadfully Rewarded. But indeed it may be admired at, to ſee any turn their backs upon God, and grow weary of his Service, who will be ſo well rewarded, greatly above what they do deſerve. To ſee Perſons turn their backs upon Salvation, we may admire at their Folly and Madneſs; what think you of that other Promiſe? *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life*, or an unfaidable Crown of Glory, as the Apoſtle *Peter*, τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον. *Sirs*, you that are weary of Gods ways, that grow tired of that which will (if you continue therein) end in your eternal Happineſs; produce ſuch a Promiſe as this from the World, Sin or Satan, if you can; no, they have no ſuch Reward; pray then be perſwaded to hold on, to perſevere. *Sirs*, you can't imagine the miſery you'll bring upon your ſelves, by drawing back; you'll

Rom. 6. 23.

Rev. 2. 10

1 Pet. 5. 4.

incur God's hatred, and you had better have the hatred of the whole World. Read and conſider; reſolve therefore whatever comes on't, to hold out to the end, that ſo you may be happy. But,

Hebr. 10. 38.

Secondly, Let it be a Uſe of Advice to the Hypocrites; you have heard how far a Hypocrite may go, and yet be rotten at heart; and you have heard ſomething of the heinouſneſs of Sin; and the puniſhment that will follow. I do now adviſe you, if you tender your Souls good, to go no further in ſuch a ſtate and condition, for you'll be damn'd for your pains: O whatever you do, be upright; let God have your hearts in all your Actions; make us no longer believe that you are what you are not, for 'tis you that will be the loſers at laſt. Read that Scripture often, and I leave you at this time, *Matth.* 5. 20. Chriſt tells you plainly, That *except your righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees*,

ses, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now what was their Righteousness? Why truly, 'twas an outside Righteousness; they were *very Hypocrites*, as Christ often calls them, *Matth.* 23. 13, 14, 15. and in many more places. And surely, if any thing moves to Sincerity, it will be the thoughts of the Punishment of Hypocrisy. But then

Thirdly, Let us take up an Use of Lamentation, and that upon the account of those poor Souls, that instead of running in the ways of God that lead to Heaven, they are running headlong to Hell: Poor Souls! don't you tremble to think of your end; methinks my heart bleeds for you! O join with me, Christians, in my sorrow for these poor Souls! Lord, what a Grief must it needs be to any compassionate heart, to think of their sad Condition! O that poor creatures

tures should with such delight work out their own ruin! O that they will be their own butchers, not of their bodies, but (which is worse) of their precious Souls! Who can forbear to weep, to see sinners go cheerfully to Hell! O that Christ and his Grace should be slighted by them that have so much need of both! O that overtures of Reconciliation should be refused by such as are just dropping into Hell, into the midst of Everlasting Burnings! Lord pity them! Lord open their eyes! O that they might see their danger, before they feel it; that so they might timely turn back, and escape it, that we may have cause to rejoice in thy Mercy towards them!

One Use more, and that shall be of Comfort to the godly, to those that run speedily, constantly, and sincerely in the ways of God. Lift up your heads with comfort, for you

you are happy souls, you are in the way of your duty, and you shall be rewarded; tho your Race be toilsome to the flesh, let the Reward that will follow upon your continuing stedfast to the end, be your Cordial and Comfort. Consider; 'Tis but a little while, and all your labour will be over, and you shall have an Eternal Rest. Do you object by way of Complaint, I suffer so much by reason of many and great Afflictions and Troubles, and by reason of God's taking away my Comforts, my Children, my Relations and Friends, that I find my self greatly hindred in my way to Heaven; and I fear that I shall not hold out long; I doubt I shall not persevere to the end. Rev. 14. 13.

I shall endeavour to answer you fully, and so close: You must then believe this as a great truth, That Afflictions must of necessity come

come upon thoſe that run in this Heavenly Race; nay, 'tis impoſſible to be freed from them; *all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus muſt ſuffer Perſecution*; for *whom God loves, he chaſtens; and ſcourges every ſon whom he receives.* We are Baſtards, and not Sons, if we are free from Affliction. Thoſe Beaſts that are appointed for the Slaughter, are let run in Fat Paſtures; but thoſe that are not appointed for ſuch an end, are daily wrought, and ſubject to the yoke: The Stones that were for *Solomon*'s Building, were ſquared and hewn before they were laid therein; and ſo muſt every Chriſtian be ſquared and hewn too, by Affliction, that is to be a lively Stone in this Spiritual Building, of which Chriſt Jeſus is the Head Corner-Stone. The Lord ſpareth ſome for a time, that he may puniſh them for ever; and he chaſtens ſome for a time, that he

2 Tim. 3. 12.

1 Kings 7. 9.

Pſal. 118. 22.

he may spare them for ever: *Dives*, that was spared on earth, was tormented in Hell; and *Lazarus* that was afflicted on earth, was received into Heaven. He that would reign with Christ in the Kingdom of Glory, must suffer for him in the vale of Tears. He that would obtain Christ, must follow him; and he that does follow him, must do it with his Cross. Christ suffered before he entred into Glory; and so must Christians before they can be glorified. Surely the Servant must not be above his Master. If we suffer, we shall reign: We must not expect to drink of those Rivers of Pleasures, that run through the Celestial Paradice, unless we are willing to drink of the bitter Cup of Affliction: Many are the Troubles of the Righteous; one affliction seldom comes alone, for God is not like the wasp, that having stung once, can sting no more, but

Luk. 16. 19. ad finem.

but there is a plurality of Croſſes with God, he can ſting agen and agen. As one ſorrowful meſſenger came to *Job* after another, even ſo one affliction viſiteth the Chriſtian after another. Thoſe therefore that run in the race of Godlineſs, muſt not think this ſtrange, neither muſt they think to be free from affliction. Thus you ſee that of neceſſity afflictions muſt come upon the people of God, upon thoſe that run in this Heavenly race. You ſay further, that God takes away your Comforts, your Children, your Relations, your Friends, and this makes you fear you ſhall not hold on, but rather draw back. In anſwer to this, conſider, Hath God dealt worſe with you than with others of his Children that have been as precious in his ſight as you, and have done as much for his Glory. Pray compare your caſe with *Job*'s, read that Chapter ſeriouſly at your leiſure, you'l there find that God depriv'd him of all his outward Comforts, and of his Chil-

Children too; and (bleſſed be God) he hath not dealt ſo ſeverely with you, you have yet a great many bleſſings and comforts, that God is yet pleaſed to continue to you, and particularly as to Children. God has not taken your All, and can't you ſpare God one Lamb or two out of your Flock without repining. Obſerve what *Job* ſays, when depriv'd of all his outward Comforts, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord:* He acknowledges him to be both good and juſt in all his ways, and bleſſeth him for all, whether giving or taking. O do you learn *Job*'s ſpirit.

Job 1.

Job 1.21.

But by this time you may readily ask, what reaſons can be given for God's thus ſuffering his Children to be afflicted? I anſwer, there are many reaſons that may be given for this; I ſhall give you a few of them.

1. God ſuffers his Children to be afflicted, that he might wean them from the love of this world; which we

we are naturally prone to dote upon, but eſpecially in a proſperous ſtate; then we are apt and ready to be forgetful of God, and of our ſelves too, then the weeds are ready to overgrow the corn, and the fleſh ready to domineer over the ſpirit; but by affliction we are brought to hate that which before we loved, and to embrace that which before we loathed. In time of proſperity we are apt to pride our ſelves in our worldly enjoyments, in our Goods and Poſſeſſions, and to have high and lofty thoughts of our ſelves, as *Nebuchadnezzar*, Dan. 4. 30. *Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the houſe of the Kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my Majeſty*? But when the Lord takes him to task, making of him to live with the beaſts of the field, and to eat graſs like oxen, then he was brought to acknowledg one above him, to acknowledg that he was able to abaſe all thoſe that walk in pride. By dealing thus with us, he brings

Dan. 4. 37.

brings us experimentally to know, that the world and the things thereof are vanity, and that they are at his diſpoſal to give and take away at his pleaſure. Thus therefore does God ſuffer his Children to be afflicted, that he might withdraw their affections from the fading vanities of the world.

2*ly*, To draw us to amendment of life; *Before I was afflicted* (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *I went aſtray, but now have I kept thy Word.* Affliction was the cauſe of his reformation; when we ſin, and go on therein, then God out of love ſtrikes us with the rod of affliction, to cauſe us to remember our ſins, and to repent of them. The affliction of the Body many times proves wholeſome Phyſick for the ſoul; though it wounds the outward man, it many times renews the inward man. God can't endure to ſee the blemiſh of ſin upon the faces of his Children, but he preſently waſh-

Pſal. 119. 67.

eth it off with the water of affliction.

3*ly*, God ſuffereth his Children to be afflicted, that they might the more earneſtly call upon him, and the more ſpeedily ſeek unto him. 'Tis hard to keep ſilence when in grievous pain. Affliction makes us run to God for help and releaſement; thus did *Jonah* when in the Whale. Our requeſts are then commonly more earneſt and fervent; how earneſt are they in their diſtreſs! *We beſeech thee, Lord, we beſeech thee.* Thus therefore does God many times oppreſs us, that we might cry unto him; crying unto him, he might hear us; and hearing us, might deliver us; and delivering us, he might be glorified of us.

Jon. 2.

Jon. 1.14.

4. For the exerciſe of their Graces, as Faith, Hope, Love, Obedience, Patience, and Humility.

1. Faith is exerciſed in Affliction, by conſidering the cauſes of God's Per-

Permiſſion, and believing moſt aſſuredly his Promiſes concerning our Deliverance: We look by an Eye of Faith beyond all outward Helps and Means, to that unſeen Hand of Power that is able and willing to deliver us; and we believe and know it ſhall be ſo, becauſe of his Word.

2. Hope; By aſſuring our ſelves of the Rewards promiſed to thoſe that ſuffer patiently; hope keeps our hearts from breaking, and it being a well-grounded hope, 'tis (when exerciſed) in the greateſt afflictions comfortable.

3. Love is exerciſed in affliction, by conſidering the love of Chriſt in ſuffering for us, and thereby we are engaged to ſuffer for him again.

4. Obedience; by conforming our wills to the will of God. Muſt I ſuffer? well, ſays the ſoul, I am contented, ſeeing it is my Father's pleaſure; I freely ſubmit, becauſe my

Lord has taught me so to do; and in obedience to God's will, the soul will submissively say, Not my will, but thine be done; tho it be never so contrary to nature, tho never so hard to bear. In the greatest afflictions the Child of God will submissively say, Lord, this is nothing to what thou didst undergo for me.

5. Patience is exercised in affliction, by suffering quietly, willingly, and cheerfully. Thus was the Lord pleased to exercise *Job*'s Patience; and although God had permitted Satan to tempt him, his enemies to undo him, his Children by sudden death to be taken from him, his body to be afflicted with boils and sores, having no part free from pain and grief; his Wife to be an occasion of offence unto him, which in these distresses should have been a comfort; yet notwithstanding all this, *Job* sin'd not against his Maker.

Job 1.

ker. Thus was the Patience of the Apostles, and Martyrs, tried and exercised, namely, by and in Affliction; who were so far from being impatient, and from murmuring, that they quietly and chearfully laid down their Lives for the Gospel.

6. Humility, by abasing our selves in the sight of God, acknowledging that these Sufferings, these Afflictions, are nothing in comparison of Hell, which for our Sins we have deserved; tho our Affliction may be many times more than we are able to bear, yet it is not so much as we do deserve.

Lastly, The Lord suffereth his People to be afflicted, that the greatness of his Power, and the infiniteness of his Mercy might be shown in the delivery of us. You read, that when the Disciples ask'd our Saviour the reason why the Man

was

was born blind: He tells them, *Not for his own sins, nor for the sins of his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him*, John 9. 2, 3. from which we may truly gather thus much, That the Man was born blind, that Christ might have occasion to shew the greatness of his Power in restoring his sight. So 'tis said of *Lazarus*, that he died to this end, *that God might be glorified* in raising him from the dead. Thus have I shewn you for what reasons God suffereth his People to be afflicted. Now from all that hath been said, we may see, that Afflictions are rather helps, than hindrances to us in this Heavenly Race; therefore be not discouraged because of Afflictions, for the Lord in his due time will deliver you out of them all; rather pray that God would sanctify your Afflictions, than remove them; and endeavour to arm your selves *with the whole armour of God*, that so you may not by reason

Joh. 11. 4.

Ephes. 6. 13.

of

of Satan's Temptations, and the prevalency of your own Corruptions, fall under them. And seeing Afflictions are so convenient for us, let us learn to bless God for them; for had it not been for these, we might have been yet (for ought we know) in love with the World and Sin, which at last would have brought us to Hell. Thus (by Divine Assistance) have I spoken what I design'd on this Subject. O that God would now be pleased to make it effectual for ~~you Souls~~ good, for the stirring of you up to be more speedy, constant, and sincere in running your Race. O that at the Day of Judgment, I might meet you all that are here this day, at the Right Hand of Jesus Christ, which will be an assurance to us of our entring into Glory; for 'tis to these he will say, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.* Now, the lit- Matth. 25. 34.

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the time that remains, let us resolve to improve, by being more speedy, constant, and sincere in running our Race. O let us *be stedfast,*

1 Cor. 15. 58. *unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

FINIS.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM